

DACIAN STUDIES

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR LA TÈNE PERIOD RESEARCHES

IN MEMORIAM DR. MIRCEA RUSU

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The volume entitled ***Dacian Studies – Contributions for La Tène period researches*** summarizes ten studies, belonging to young scientists from several Transylvanian profile institutions (universities, institutes, museums). All these 13 researchers, the majority of them PhD, have already assumed important contributions concerning the second period of Iron Age on the area of Transylvania.

Gathering over 160 pages of written text and illustrations, the present volume of studies is dedicated to the memory of **PhD. Mircea Rusu**, – researcher from Cluj-Napoca, a major personality, archeological school creator and mentor of many researchers – at the 10th commemoration year of his regretted disappearance.

Translated in English, ***Dacian Studies – Contributions for La Tène period researches*** is desired to be a promotion instrument abroad, for new researches linked with the dacian civilization and the premises of its appearance, mostly in Transylvania.

The studies of the volume is treating issues on metamorphoses of the outside Carpathian getic world, to the phenomenon of Celtic colonization in Transylvania, towards the movement of Bastarns on both sides of the Eastern Carpathians. Other contributions rely in the observation of newly discovered sites. On the other hand, several studies discuss and place in value astonishing discoveries, as: statues, fibulae, weapons, very important instruments on affirming the chronology of contexts in which these items were discovered. Finally, one of the studies is analyzing cattle economy of the dacian community in a certain micro-zone. Without focusing strictly on a certain segment of La Tène period, the volume, through its theme diversity, it's painting aspects of the mentioned period, mostly on a chronological point of view, to offer for its reader elements of the complex puzzle of a period not enough researched and known.

PhD. ALEXANDRU V. MATEI researcher

FALX DACICA. SUGGESTION FOR DACIAN CURVED TYPES OF WEAPONS

Cătălin Borangic

In fact, the oldest metal pieces discovered on the territory of actual Romania, dating in the 13th – 12th centuries BC, are weapons¹. The technological progresses accumulated during the next millennium, concerning iron manufacturing² made possible the obtaining of a new generation of weapons, more efficient ones, with strong individual characters, true blades of the populations who have worn them. Such an evolution can be seen in Dacia also, as a result of manufacturing and experience concentration of the blacksmiths specialized mostly on weapons, to obtain the curved sword, the famous and frightening *falx dacica*. In a warrior society, as the ancient north-Danubian is, it is a normal fact that the metallurgical progresses, in our case the iron processing is very well reflected specially in the quality and efficiency of weapons.

Revealed by many written sources, archeological and numismatic as well, the curved sword of the Dacians – mostly during the last period of the existence of the Dacian Reign –, among a variety of forms and dimensions, the only constant feature of this weapon was the concave curve of the blade.

To extract the real emblem of the Dacians, the curved sword, we will propose a typology based on the *dimensions of the blade* and the *dimension of the curve*.

Generally speaking, *falx* meant all the objects with differing shapes and dimensions, but their common issue relied in the fact that their blades were curved towards the interior, fact that differentiated them from several knife types³. So, the collocation defined as “*Dacorum falcibus*” contains the following items: sickles, scythes, daggers and bill-hooks, the curved dagger

¹ For the répertoire of early iron discoveries see also Nikolaus Boroffka, *Folosirea fierului în România de la începuturi până în secolul al VIII-lea î.e.n.*, in *Apulum*, XXIV, 1987, p. 62–73.

² For iron manufacturing result see also Ioan Glodariu, Eugen Iaroslavschi, *Civilizația fierului la daci (sec. II î.e.n. – I e.n.)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, and Eugen Iaroslavschi, *Tehnica la daci*, Cluj-Napoca, 1997.

³ *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines d'après les textes et les monuments*, vol. II, part II (F-G), Paris, 1926, s. v. *falx*, p. 968–971.

(*sica*) and the two main curved swords: *rhomphaea* with its Thracian – Illyric origin, having an impressive length (sometimes even more than 2 meters)⁴, and the medium length type used mostly in the areas north of the Danube.

Its large scale perception, M. Cornelius Fronto would have thought of, when he introduced the “*Dacorum falcibus*” collocation, meaning all the curved weapons of the Dacians. Although Publius Papinius Statius, affirms, that *falx* is the symbol weapon of the *getae*⁵, fact that let us think on the supposition, that only one of their weapons have won such a reputation, that could have been associated with the ethnicity of their users. Summarizing the given information, with the artistic representations of the period, the only candidate to this statute remains that certain *falcatus ensis* which became, mostly in the recent specialty literature *falx dacica*, although the detailed features of this weapon were not yet established.

The typology that will be presented in the followings and the repertoire of representations that constitutes the basis of the present study does not have an exhaustive character. The most certain fact that we can observe is the large variety of these artifacts. This variety permits us to conclude that the artists pleaded rather to their intuition, than describing the realistic model that lay in front of them. Towards, there are even other explanations concerning the fact that blacksmiths did not use stencils that could permit a standardization of the pieces, rather more, they manufactured the metal bars individually, so, their final dimensions, form and curve opening angle differed from one piece to the other. Visualizing such a screenplay we could conclude, that every artist made its masterpiece depending on his abilities and realistic scheme image, but also correct in the point of view of the represented exemplary.

Most of the representations of the repertoire come from coins. It is quite easy to understand why, because the coin, mostly ones with reduced value, but high circulation power, was the most efficient mean of communicating to the whole wide world the victory of Romans in Dacia. It is very strange, that from a wide variety of representation possibilities, the curved sword was used as the symbol of Dacia. Beyond the battlefield echoes, of those who were there, the coins were the most common propaganda instrument that contributed to the association of Dacians and

⁴ *Dictionnaire des Antiquités*, s. v. *rhomphaea*, tom IV, part II, p. 865.

⁵ To such an interpretation, are leading the 131–134 verses *Achilleis*'s work, second part: “[...] quo Paeones arma rotatu, quo Macetae sua gaessa citent, quo turbine contum Sauromates **falcemque Getes** arcumque Gelonus tenderet et flexae Balearicus actor habenae [...]” (edition Aldo Marastoni, Leipzig, 1974, p. 51).

falces, expressed by⁶, who tell us that Parts, one of the most fearsome enemies of the Empire, were assimilated with the arrows they used. This symbolic association of the Dacians with their favorite weapon survived a long period after the impact of wars, coins emitted by emperors after, till the middle of 3rd century AD, are a very eloquent clue, that the image of the civilian, or soldier Dacians it is represented with the curved war.

This multitude of representations have as a correspondent a wide typology, due to the fact, that there are no coins that represent the weapons in the same way, differences can be observed not only in their numbers, but in their shapes and sizes. Due to this fact and that often the sword is showed as a part of a trophy or just thrown in a pile of weapons, not being very visible, we considered much more useful the parallel representation on coins and on Trajan's Column, *Tropaeum Traiani*, other known forum monuments, and sword discovered in archeological researches. This method of presentation, beyond the disadvantages of a possible mixture, seemed to be the best illustration of details which lead to the diversification of typology.

1. War scythe, for two hands, long and highly curved blade.

The characteristic of length was established by comparison with other objects near it was found on representations, especially swords, spears, lances and shields. So, the length varied, according to the handle and its characteristics, between 1/1, 5–2 m, fact that permits us to presume, that we stand in front of a *rhomphaea*. Such a shape and dimensions probably made this sword type quite hard to handle, that's why it is also rare (Plate I, fig. 1).

2. *Sword for two hands, long blade, curved upper part, elegant trace of the curve that evolves almost into a semicircular shape.* This type, with its dimension up to 1–1,5 m, is also a *rhomphaea* type, that we find on coins representing the trophies on defeated Dacia (Plate I, fig. 2).

3. *Sword for two hands, long blade, curved peak only.*

A representation of this type can be observed on the 34th metope on the Adamklissi Monument, in the hand of the figure in the background, right side of the scene (Plate I, fig. 3). Only partially visible, on the back of a denary emitted shortly after the conquest of Dacia, such

⁶ "[Trajan] went to war with good soldiers, who disdained the Parts, our enemies, and they did not care about their arrows, after they were wounded by the curved swords of the dacians" (M. Cornelius Fronto, *Principia Historiae*, II, p. 204, *apud Izvoare privind istoria României*, I, București, 1964, p. 533).

an exemplary can be seen rising from a pile of shields, on which, a dacians prisoner is placed (Plate I, fig. 4). A particularity of this sword, – if we consider that the image on the coin is not erroneous–, is represented by the central mortise of the blade, not met in the repertoired representations, only on the fragment discovered at Tilișca, interpreted as a sword end, but it can easily be a dagger fragment too⁷. In the eventuality that such a weapon really existed, the blood flowing channel and the special form of the curve, ended in a very sharp peak, suggests the possibility that this type of sword was used not only for cutting and punching, but for stabbing too.

4. Sword for one or two hands, medium dimension blade, ample curve that begins from the middle of the blade.

The best representations are visible on the frieze of Trajan's Column (Plate I, fig. 5, fig. 6), and a few pieces that we gathered, as it is the most emblematic discovered at Sarmizegetusa Regia, in a workshop on terrace VIII⁸. Dated to the end of 1st century AD – beginning of 2nd century AD, kept at the National Museum of Transylvania at Cluj, under inventory number V 18532, presents a length of 66,5 cm of which 49 is the blade itself. The peak is missing an a few centimeters from the handle shaft. (Plate I, fig. 7).

5. Sword for one or two hands, depending on the handle length, medium dimension blade, rounden on the trajectory of a semi circle, with an overdrawn opening, that gives the blade a slightly bended shape. (Plate I, fig. 8).

6. Sword for one or two hands, depending on the handle length, medium dimension blade, curved on the superior part, on the trace of an arch toward a semi circle.

This type has also several representations. A superb exemplary can be seen next to an abandoned shield, on which a person is mourning conquered Dacia. It is represented on the reverse of a denary emitted by Trajan (la RIC II 218 variant). With a very short handle, as if a compensation, with the opening on the entire surface of the superior end, the sword is playing the role of the symbol of conquest. (Plate I, fig. 9).

⁷ Nicolae Lupu, *Tilișca. Așezările arheologice de pe Cățânaș*, București, 1989, p. 74 și pl. 18/12.

⁸ C. Daicoviciu, *Șantierul Grădiștea Muncelului*, in *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche*, 4th year of edition, nr. 1–2, 1953, p. 169 and fig. 22; I. Glodariu, E. Iaroslavschi, *op. cit.*, p. 137–138 and fig. 71/1; Gabriela Gheorghiu, *Dacii pe cursul mijlociu al Mureșului (sfârșitul sec. II a. Ch. – începutul sec. II p. Ch.)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 182 și 460, fig. 186/4; Exhibition catalogue *Dacia Augusti Provincia*, București, 2006, p. 125, nr. cat. 69.

7. *Sword for one hand, medium dimension blade, curved on its superior end, tracing an obtuse angle, forming a long peak, probably very sharp.*

Without excluding the possible existence of this type, we must specify that the representations that we have found are difficult to frame them in a type point of view, due to the unspecific representations and distortion of dimensions, so the image on the coin can be catalogued as a 50–60 cm long sword, more similar to a dagger, or a battle knife (Plate I, fig. 10).

8. *Sword for one or two hands, medium dimension blade, with only the peak curved.*

This exemplary represented on a sestertius emitted by Emperor Hadrian in 136 (RIC II 849) it appears in the left hand of a character, it has a long handle, straight blade, suddenly curved on its end. Till this point of the research we have not found another coin with an earlier dating, to represent the traditional weapon of Dacians, other than a trophy as a symbol of defeat⁹. So, this can be its first representation as a symbol of victory, symbol of pacifier victory, of civilization, sign that the province was already well anchored in the structures of the Roman Empire. Such an evolution can be observed on the illustrations of coins emitted by Hadrian, where right next to the *vexillum*, the curved sword is associated as symbols of Dacia¹⁰ (Plate I, fig. 11).

9. *Cangea*, with two variants:

a) *semi circular curve* combined with a long handle clenched with a metal ring. It is a very efficient weapon shaped as a battle scythe but dimensions of a *rhomphaea*, as it can be seen on metopes XVIII and XXII of the monument from Adamklissi¹¹ (Plate I, fig. 12).

b) *long peak because of the large opening of the blade*. It is represented on metope XX of the same monument¹² (Plate I, fig. 13).

⁹ Until now, only coins emitted by Hadrian had such a status. See also Iudita Winkler, *Personificarea Daciei pe monedele romane imperiale*, in *Studii Clasice*, II, 1965, p. 229–230.

¹⁰ For details concerning the attitude change and its significance, see Carmen Maria Petolescu, *La Dacie sur les monnaies de l'empereur Hadrien*, in Octavian Iliescu (ed.), *La numismatique, source de l'histoire de l'art et de l'histoire des idées*. Travaux présentés au XVe Congrès international des sciences historiques, Bucarest, 11 août 1980, București, 1981, p. 57–64.

¹¹ *Apud* F. B. Florescu, *Monumentul de la Adamklissi*, fig. 197, p. 429 and fig. 201, p. 433.

¹² *Apud* F. B. Florescu, *Monumentul de la Adamklissi*, fig. 199, p. 431.

10. *Sica* type curved dagger

The second symbol-weapon of Dacians does not see among specialists an equal opinion concerning their features. The confusion starts probably from the name of the weapon which in ancient Greek describes certain species of sword¹³. After gathering weapons that were named as told earlier, used by several populations, including Dacians, as given seen even on *Tropaeum Traiani*, one of the epigraphs from Birdoswald and Trajan's coins, makes A. J. Reinach to affirm that: "undoubtedly it is a scythe shaped blade, as it is the Thracian *rhomphaea* hedging knife type"¹⁴. *Sica* can be the enigmatic and terrible *falx dacica*, interpretation that is present even in Romanian historiography¹⁵.

Such a hypothesis on the identity between *sica* and the curved sword cannot be easily observed if we consider the fact that in latin, *sica*=curved dagger, is a member of the vocabulary with *sicilis* = sickle, *sicilio* = to cut with the sickle, *sicilicula* = small sickle, *sicilimentum* = straw, *sicarius* = throat cutter, assassin¹⁶.

Due to unknown reason, in the Romanian historiography it is accepted the identity between *sica* and the curved dagger, but when facts are discussed on artifact examples, we observe that there are major differences, mostly concerning dimensions, blade width and the aspect of the curve¹⁷.

No representations from antiquity are, unfortunately, more conclusive or, sufficiently conclusive to be cataloged as a dagger or fighting knife, the weapons that are worn by the Dacians, represented on the Dacian Column or personifications of certain coins. As noted in the case of swords, each representation has an individual, but quite clearly defined, determined either by the artist's preference for a particular vision or, certainly, and the artisanal nature of producing these items, which excludes data standardization and provides the master unlimited freedom of expression.

The most characteristic type of curved weapon in the Dacian warrior panoply is represented, therefore, by a sharp dagger with a blade curved and triangle, having blood drainage ditch along the blade and

¹³ Translation of the fragment from Dion Chrysostomos, XII, 19: "There [in the country of the *getae*] you could see everywhere *swords*, shields, spears [...]" (*apud Izvoare privind istoria României*, vol. I, p. 448–449).

¹⁴ *Dictionnaire des Antiquités*, tom IV, part II (R-S), p. 1301.

¹⁵ See also F. B. Florescu, *Die Trajanssäule*, p. 85, for whom *sica* means the curved sword.

¹⁶ Cf. G. Guțu, *Dicționar latin-român*, București, 1983, those certain voices.

¹⁷ See for example the panoply of exhibiton catalogue entitled *Dacia Augusti Provincia*, p. 125–127.

zoomorphic or geometric inlaid on it. The dimensions of the dagger, known generally as *sica*, are changing between the length of 25 and 35 cm.¹⁸

The almost equal morphologic unit is outturned by the improperly called daggers, fact that allowed to some specialists to widen the category and insert smaller dimension swords¹⁹, assimilated to this category, very probably, because curved daggers are invariably attributed to Thracian ethnicity and also associated with them.

The ease seen on considering as daggers *mahaira* and *falx* type curved medium dimensioned weapons, spread throughout the Thracian world, made very difficult the inventory and study them, although these items are present widely in archeological complexes and figurative art as well.

In the general frame of the dagger notion, those belonging to the Thracians, present specific attributes mostly concerning their shape, and spiritual mark. The first case, maybe the most obvious one, the shape of these knives and the triangle section of the blade, the elegant curve without two edges, only on the concave part of the blade. This conformation improves the basic features of the daggers, throughout the fact that although they keep the high penetration force, amplifies the effects of stabbing and cutting.

The second particularity of Thracian daggers is the spiritual load, deducted by the decorations on the blade²⁰, and the idea of sacrifice.

In a typology point of view, in spite of a strong standardization tendency, *sica* daggers have three main types, differentiated only by a few morphological aspects, not functional ones.

The first type is marked by the massive blade, short and sharp peak, slight curve, short handle shaft, triangle shaped, orifice for rivet near the blade. The blade has incised decoration on it and a blood flowing ditch. The robust aspect, among the dating of the majority of pieces during

¹⁸ Aurel Rustoiu, *Thracian sica and dacian falx. The history of a national weapon*, in *Dacia Felix. Studia Michaeli Bărbulescu oblata*, Editura Tribuna, Cluj-Napoca, 2007, p. 68.

¹⁹ Macrea M., Lupu N., Floca O., Berciu I., *Cetăți dacice din sudul Transilvaniei*, Editura Meridiane, București, 1966, p. 22; Eugen D. Pădurean, *Depozitul de arme și unelte de la Neudorf, Pârâul Roșia, județul Arad*, in *Daci și romani – 1900 de ani de la integrarea Daciei în Imperiul Roman*, Timișoara, march 24–26, 2006, p. 219–233, Pl. VIII.

²⁰ Aurel Rustoiu, *Ornamentica pumnalelor curbe traco-dacice*, in *Studia archaeologica et historica Nicolae Gudea dicata – Festschrift für Professor Nicolae Gudea Gelegentlich des 60. Geburtstages*, [Die Ornamente der Krummen Thrako-Dakischen Dolche], Zalău, 2001, p. 181–194.

3rd – 1st centuries BC, allows the hypothesis that this type evolved during the mentioned chronological horizon. (Plate II, fig. 1)²¹.

The second type, not very different morphologically presents notable particularities, being grouped next to a dagger discovered at Padea, location that gave the name of Padea-Panaghiurski Kolonii cultural aspect. One of the best preserved items is the one discovered at Slatina²² (Plate II, fig. 2).

The third type, also the most numerous one, signs a series of repertoired items in this stage of research, spread in north-western Bugaria, south-west and centre of Romania. These daggers are characterized by the long blade, elegant execution in the majority of the cases, blade decorated with circular incisions, blood flow ditch and the tongue of the handle continuing on its length and also guard muff. These distinctive elements can be found on all the artifacts, or different elements on several pieces. The dimensions show a relative standardization, situated among 30–40 cm in length, 3 cm in width, but some of the pieces present a slight increase of the dimensions. The low preserving level or unspecified measurements have not always permitted to settle pieces into this type frame, only statistics allowed us to analyze these weapons. This type of dagger is dated during the 2nd – 1st centuries BC. One well preserved piece was found at Cetate, Dolj County, on the site named “la Salii” (Plate II, fig. 3)²³.

Prestige, its excellent combat qualities, a well elaborated mystical component, are the elements, that permit the identification of a military elite, that by its coagulation could build a barbarian state, that was not just a strong military opponent of the Roman Empire.

Starting with the exposed data, we can affirm that *sica* dagger represents an important archeological artifact, due to its role and importance for the Thracian society, towards it is a contribution to understand its social and military mechanisms, but through its special

²¹ Exhibiton catalogue *Dacia Augusti Provincia*, București, 2006, p. 127, nr. cat. 73; Exhibiton catalogue *I Daci*, Editura Electa, Firenze, 1997, p. 240, fig. 461.

²² Mihail Butoi, *Mormânt de incinerare din epoca fierului descoperit la Slatina*, in *Oltenia. Studii și comunicări*, Craiova, 1974, p. 29–32, fig. 2.

²³ C. S. Nicolăescu-Plopșor, *Antiquités celtiques en Olténie*, in *Dacia. Recherches et découvertes archéologiques en Roumanie*, XI–XII, 1945–1947, București, p. 19, Pl. III/6; Ion Miclea, Radu Florescu, *Strămoșii românilor. Vestigii milenare de cultură și artă. Geto-dacii*, București, 1980, p. 46, fig. 199; Valeriu Sîrbu, *Credințe și practici funerare, religioase și magice în lumea geto-dacilor (pornind de la descoperiri arheologice din Câmpia Brăilei)*, Editura Porto-Franco, Galați, 1993, p. 78, fig. 17, 7/8.

spiritual importance we can conclude elements of the population's complicated religion.

Last, but not the least, these daggers complete the military equipment of fearsome warriors whom have provoked serious problems to the most militarized Empire of antiquity, proving a real combination between sacred and profane, between life and perception of death, and its role in human destiny.

11. The curved hedging knife

Our opinion is, that this weapon does not have datable representations, but there were discovered a series of artifacts, that can hardly could accept other interpretation. With a very thick and wide blade, and only the peak curved (Plate II, fig. 4)²⁴, the pieces of this type can play a double role, as tools, although their utilities are quite difficult to guess. Given their massive shape and weight these pieces are much more suitable as military equipment, than any other use.

*

At the end of this attempt on typology building it is necessary to assume a retrospective look so we can place our attention on curved swords.

Applying mathematical logics to the combination of the two main features (dimension of the blade and curve dimension) we find that there are so many weapon variants as shapes are. Excluding those variants that were not found neither in antique artistic representations, nor archeological excavations, we have established a hypothetic panoply of Dacian curved weapons, as follows: eight sword types, three dagger types, two hedging knife types and one knife type. A panoply too busy, given the period and the manner of manufacturing them, perhaps ruined moldings after each artifact and, especially, the aleatory that often characterized the artistic creations. It could be observed on several occasions that a kind of composition that sometimes contained a type of weapon, sometimes another.

We don't have the total conviction on our capacity to select and categorize the images, so it is a normal fact, that the reader may think that certain pieces were misplaced in categories. Why did we choose such a path

²⁴ The piece is kept in the Museum of Alba Iulia, found during the archeological excavations from Căpâlna. Inventory number 539. Similar pieces from the Museum of Sighișoara were published by Gheorghe Baltag, *Sighișoara înainte de Sighișoara*, București, 2000, p. 86, fig. 24. Another piece was identified as a hedging knife published by Ioan Glodariu and Eugen Iaroslavschi in *Civilizația fierului la daci*, fig. 72/1.

if the arbitrary is following every step made by us and what can be considered available at the end of this classification? Or, the question may be rephrased: why did the Dacians use so many sword types? Or, isn't it possible that we are dealing with the evolution of the same weapon, that receives different shapes?

First of all, we have to remember that the rarity of the artifacts made impossible the immediate identification of a prototype for the weapon that caused to Romans such an impact that they transformed it into a symbol. In such a situation any other information could have been useful, but the artistic representations were at hand.

Of course, we have not omitted for a moment the necessity to confront between representations and, particularly, the realities captured by archaeological research.

These considerations require us to divide again, the eight variants of sword resulting in two categories: certain and possible. Certain ones represented by an artifact on which there is no any doubt regarding the authenticity, others were considered as possible, even if there were not yet discovered such artifacts, but it is possible that they may occur in the future, because the manual technique of their production allows their existence at the time, even if in a limited number.

We will proceed even to a renaming of the types, to facilitate their operation, given that mathematical abstraction can be certainly much more accurate, but cumbersome and difficult to remember.

I. First of all, a clarification is needed: despite the frequency of the appearance of reproduced long sword types, especially on coins, we did not find it neither reported in historical literature nor as a copy of what might be called *Dacian rhomphaea* – a sword with a longer blade, strongly bent on a stylish trace, depending on the technical skills of the blacksmith or those of whom used them. The lack of archaeological finds from the Dacian area is so far a free classification of this weapon in the three variants each representation identified by comparing their results. Unable to establish “live” any differential characteristics, is still as possible, the very probable existence of such a type of sword, since Romans felt the need to illustrate it on two memorial monuments of the conquest of Dacia. As for its representation coins, we do not think that is devoid of meaning that they appear only on issues from the reign of Trajan, a sign that on the first hand, the Dacians had invested in defending their independence, can provide all the panoply of arms curves, on the other hand that *Dacian*

rhomphaea impressive and fierce, was not, however, the weapon in excellence associated with their ethnicity.

II. Also possible and very likely is the following type of Sword, this time short, with curved upper half as a dependent route proving certainly better technical skills than the alleged maker's characteristics of either the possible options. We consider here especially those dating from the monetary representation of the middle of 3rd century which offer a very good analogy to fragmentary sword discovered at Grădiştea Muncelului Sarmizegetusa²⁵, kept at the History Museum Arad (Plate III, fig. 1) or a copy, most eloquent discovered at Cristeşti, Mureş County and preserved at the Museum of Targu-Mures (Plate III, fig. 2)²⁶. Registered as "sica" and "sickle", its appearance and characteristics already reported, which individualizes the findings of a Dacian swords have inhibited attempts of possible publication. But in connection with representations made of the famous late Dacian *falx* above, this weapon is likely to come out of obscurity and become the prototype of the final version that could take a sword-symbol, in a time when the boundaries of the Roman province were seriously challenged by the attacks and the free Dacians used any sharp tool they found useful as a weapon. So we dare to conclude that we indeed are dealing with a Targu-Mures *Dacian falx* type, probably dating from the 3rd century and particularly illustrative for the final chronology of the curved sword, and for the previous period as well, when forms must have existed and crafts made by artists with less dexterity than blacksmiths of Sarmizegetusa.

A possible type III is short and bent bladed sword with only the top curved, which seems most appropriate to name **curved gladius**. The combination of terms is only apparently contradictory, since it was circulated in antiquity, at least as poetic license. We meet it, for example, as *falcatus ensis* (*ensis* as a synonym for *gladius*²⁷), in the two *Metamorphoses* of Ovid²⁸.

²⁵ Eugen D. Pădureanu, *Două descoperiri arheologice inedite*, in vol. *Adevărul omeneste posibil pentru rânduirea binelui. Volum omagial Sever Dumitraşcu*, Oradea, 2001, p. 155–156 and plate I, p. 160.

²⁶ Valeriu Lazăr, *Repertoriul arheologic al judeţului Mureş*, Târgu-Mureş, 1995, p. 105.

²⁷ *Dictionnaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines*, tom IV, part II (R-S), p. 1600.

²⁸ Partea I, versurile 717–718: *Nec mora, falcato nutantem vulnerat ense, qua collo est confine caput [...]*; part IV, verse 727: *Desinit in piscem falcato vulnerat ense [...]*, and part V, verse 80.

We suppose there is such a weapon in the idea of its presence on the Adamklissi monument, illustrated with various curved weapons, just for that reason should not be random or just the consequence of a mistake of the artist. Also, if indeed Dacians unit stationed in (C) *Amboglanna* were equipped with curved swords, the two epigraphs found in Birdoswald (Plate IV, fig. 1, fig. 2) faithfully reproduce its image, is to assume a symbiosis between the *falx* and *gladius* or perhaps better said, adjusting the size and shape curved swords after a weapon used in a disciplined, close combat formations, as were those that made up the Roman army. We therefore have to face again a choice rather late, hybridized curved sword.

IV. The last type that we propose, and finally one hundred percent certain, we called **Sarmizegetusa** as place of origin of the three curved swords which we are sure they are authentic and have kept nearly all other features: the one at National History Museum of Transylvania in Cluj-Napoca (Plate 5, fig. 2), the National Museum of History of Romania in Bucharest (Plate V, fig. 1)²⁹.

Treating so with the utmost reluctance, figurative art achievements, we are left with four basic types, subtypes whose multiplication is not obviously excluded by anything. But things can still go vice versa because, by bringing into question the principle criterion timeline of evolution, the four basic types are restricted to two: type *Dacian rhomphaea* – long curved sword, and the type Sarmizegetusa – curved sword of average size for short, during the Roman rule that will develop into two sub-variants: *curved gladius* and *Târgu Mureș*.

Restricting the maximum angle of approach and looking at the curved Dacian sword only with light curve without doubt the authenticity of archaeological finds and chronological classification, we have to note that the *Dacian falx* did not wear only one form that indicated the type *Sarmizegetusa*, any attempt at typology would become inappropriate. Going forward on this interpretative thread, we have to restrict the use of this weapon in the chronological segment bounded by king Burebista and

²⁹ C. Daicoviciu, *Șantierul Grădiștea Muncelului*, în *Studii și Cercetări de Istorie Veche*, 4th year of edition, nr. 1–2, 1953, p. 169; I. Glodariu, E. Iaroslavschi, *Civilizația fierului la daci (sec. I î.e.n. – I e.n.)*, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, p. 137–138 and fig. 71/1; Exhibition catalogue *I Daci. Mostra della civiltà daco-getica in epoca classica*, Roma, 1979–1980, p. 52, fig. 125; Gabriela Gheorghiu, *Dacii pe cursul mijlociu al Mureșului (sfârșitul sec. II a.Ch. – începutul sec. II p.Ch.)*, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 182 și 460, fig. 186/4; Exhibition catalogue *Dacia Augusti Provincia*, București, 2006, p. 125, nr. cat. 69.

second campaign of Trajan in Dacia, because we do not have copies dating before 1st century BC or after Roman conquest. In this perspective, the question naturally arises: was the time sufficient to ensure such fame that reverberation of the weapon went till the mid-3rd century? More: was time sufficient to ensure this weapon its widespread among the Dacians that lived up to its reputation of fame it has been awarded with?

Judging by the place of origin – yet only one Sarmizegetusa Regia – and by the small number of doubted Dacian curved swords should say that this weapon was a privilege of the elite, in case of warriors in the King's entourage, its area of use focusing around the capital, although its production was probably limited to workshops from there. It was therefore rather a hierarchy and prestige sign, and not a weapon of mass. Why? Maybe because it was still a novelty, made more difficult, more expensive, too "stylish" for an ordinary soldier, through its shape and accessories that were worn.

It remains then to the use bulk fighters, other curved weapons, and this statement seems confirmed by the representations of figurative art, highlighting a variety of types, from massive *rhomphaeae* to hedge knives, their danger and their effectiveness is provided precisely by the ability to fold according to the skills of fighting of each individual. And can it be explained why Latin texts speak in a way so ambiguous about *falx* when associated with the Dacians, thereby stopping the accurate identification of the weapon.

These assumptions are not contradicted by the preserved sword fragments, such as those of the Museum of Sighisoara (Plate IV, Fig 4, Fig. 5). Their manufacturing imperfections may be an indication that other workshops producing swords were not on the same standards as those on the terraces of the Grădișteța Muncelului, but still with similar results, which means that its production was not a monopoly, but that have spread to other metallurgical centers. The story of the swords could be more complex. It could belong to Decebal's close defeat or of refugees from the territory or their representatives could get there in other ways: as a commodity or as war prey. Unfortunately, the lack of clear clues for dating and pressure of suspicions regarding the discovery place, any scenario is possible.

*

Typology of weapons test hard curved weapon categories listed so far, due to the rarity of artifacts and duplicitous nature of artistic representation. Trying to overlap *falx* term used by Latin authors on

Dacian curved swords failed only to the extent that this combination is provided the most likely because, after the reign of Trajan, representations of *rhomphaea* disappear, and the *sica* daggers are very rare. It has fully succeeded, however, we think, the attempt to identify – the copy in the Museum of Cluj-Napoca, the best preserved item – the most eloquent model for curved sword, to decipher its secrets and effectiveness. It's irrelevant that the type of Sword will be used at the time was less than we used to think, for limited distribution not diminish individual characteristics. Conversely, the heroism which was assumed by handling such weapons, it further highlighted its qualities.

We thought that the Romans and therefore, even if the artistic representations selection was made in time, the choice of the curved sword-symbol as a weapon in the hands of Dacia placed it where it was not captive to the law could not be random. It matters less than the exact figure of this sword, especially if proscription of Dacian curved weapons will already led to its disappearance.

It is very important that developments had a perception that the subjects defining the elements built into the north-Danubian Empire in 106. For if the time of Trajan weapon-symbol became useless, being crushed by superior arms and discipline of Roman legionaries, under Hadrian and recovered some earlier majesty, setting up auxiliary units formed by the Dacians, and so captive Dacia image slew of mourning is replaced by that of a province that is integrated into the Empire called upon to defend just the terrible sword with previously defended independence³⁰.

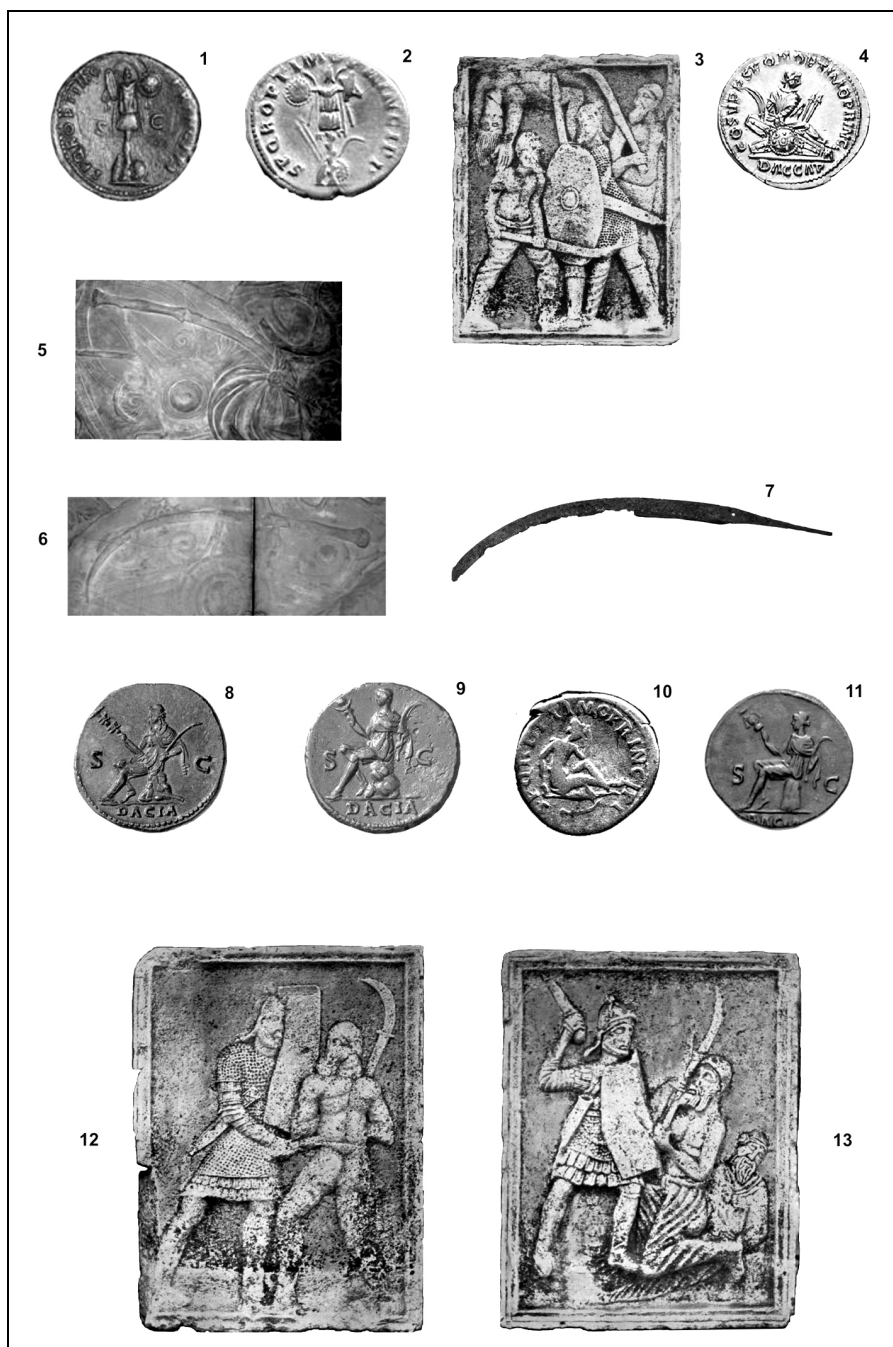
Repeating this image and updating to the middle of the 3rd century, a new formula, and more explicit, can only be the artistic reflection of the Dacians involvement in defending the empire. The whole series of monetary issues of Philip the Arab's imperial family must have been about the great appeal of Carpi, defeated in 247, banners present embodiment with the province of Dacia and customary sword in his hand curve illustrating the cooperation between the legions and the subjects of the Empire in a time of crisis, which could call into question the benefits of Roman rule. Updating old symbols may have deeper meanings and as a form of ideological expression and artistic materialization of another event that occurs during those years, namely end of a century and a half after the conquest of Dacia.

However, it is clear that the symbol, once feared and ostracized, became part of an ideology of coexistence. The same message is originating

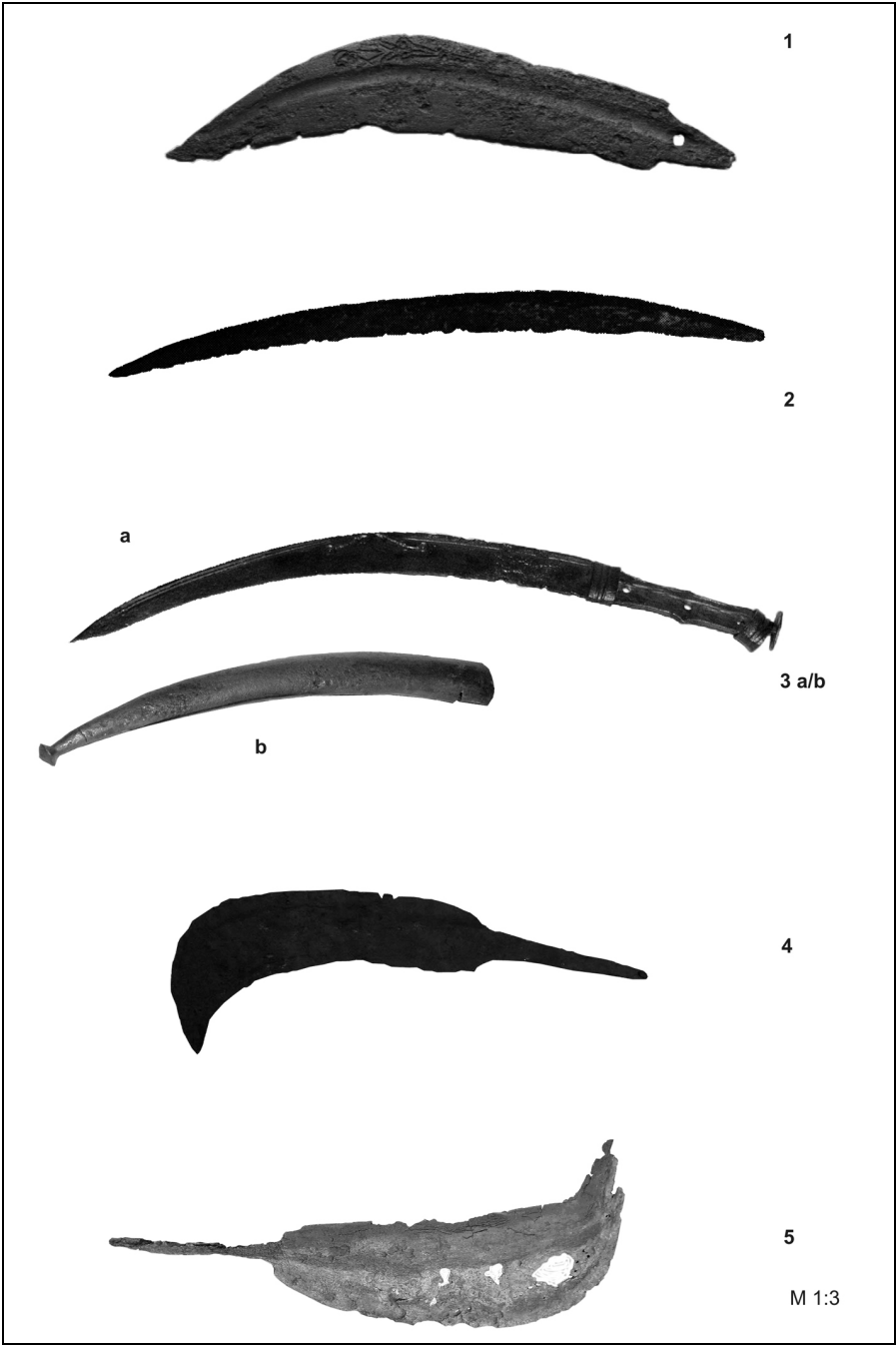
³⁰ See also Iudita Winkler, *op. cit.*, p. 229–230.

and epigraphic monuments erected by Dacian auxiliaries from Britain, which combines one of the common ways of conveying victory – palm tree – what once devoted warrior spirit of the Dacians.

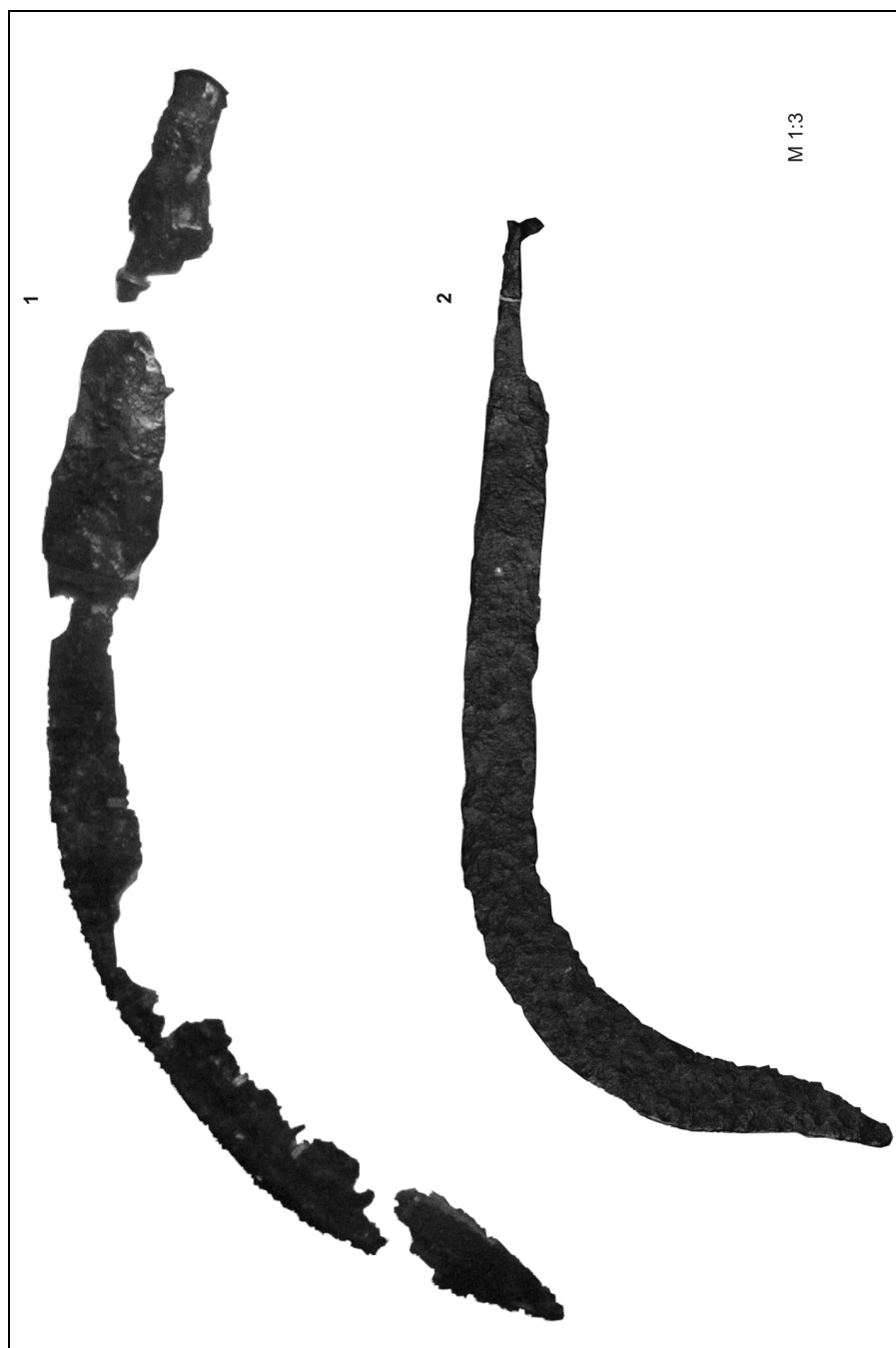
Of course, in all cases, it is possible and is not just reiterate a cliché. It does not decrease in value but the mechanism leading to the emergence of that cliché, although this mechanism may not be today than intuition. So let us, instead of ruin a legend, to conclude by saying that the Dacian *falx* is the most appropriate name for the beautiful curve of the Dacian weapon, which they themselves have created, the harmonious proportions, elegant shape and valor with which it was handled in crucial moments of their history has won as a symbol status, and whose secrets we hope to disclose during all future researches.



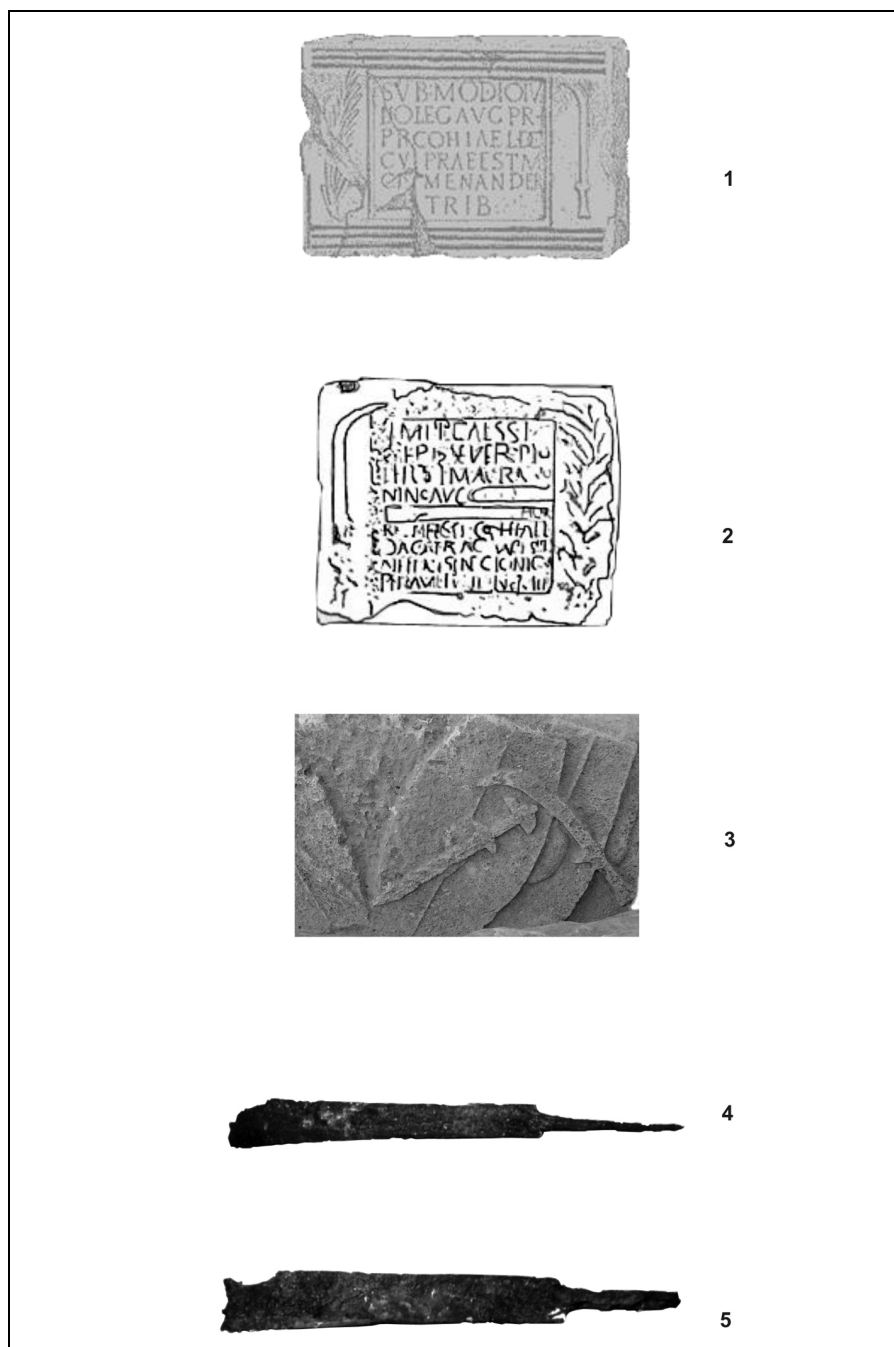
Planşa I.



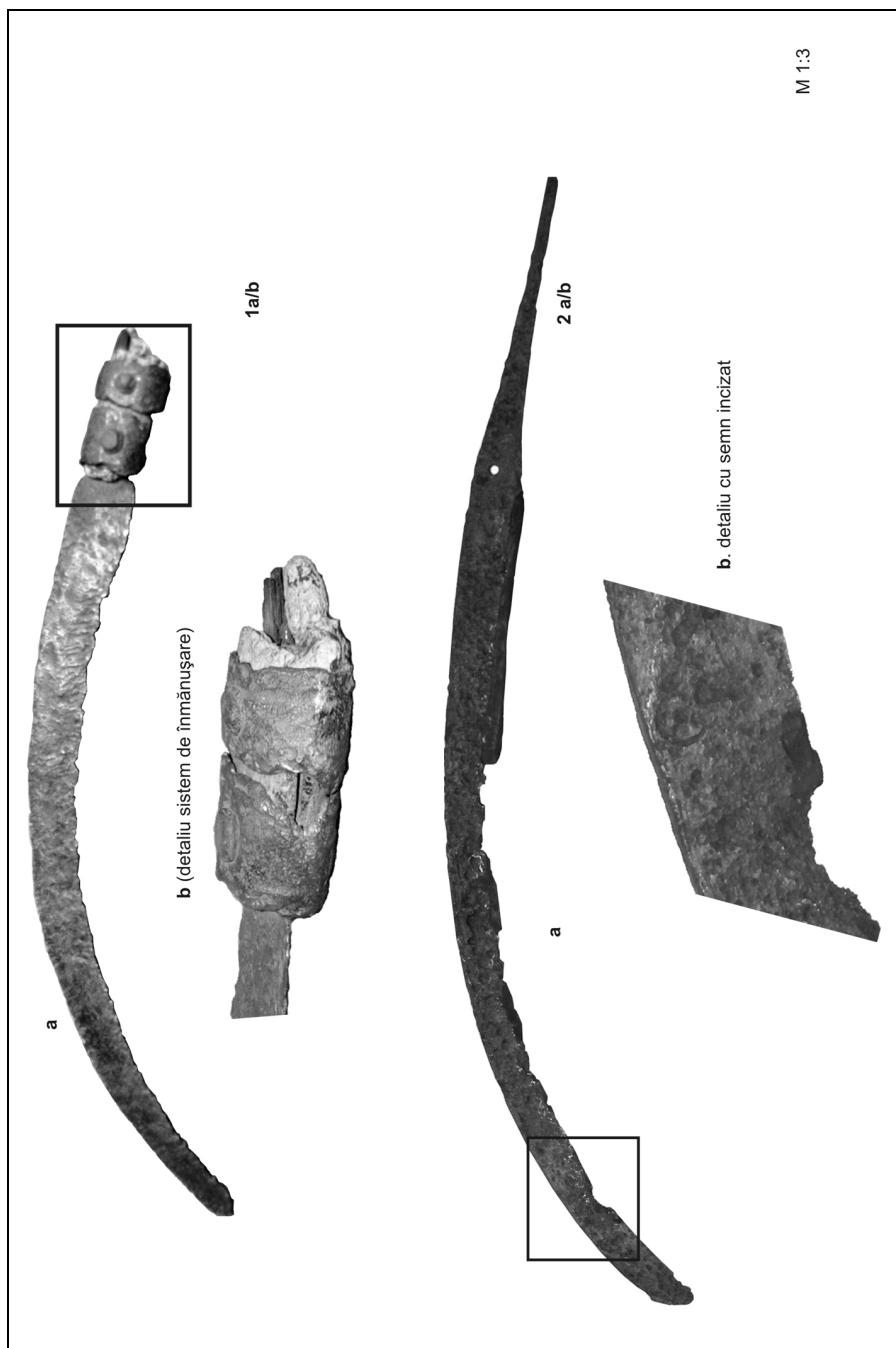
Planşa II.



Planşa III.



Planşa IV.



Planșa V.